



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

For Release August 23, 1994

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**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE CONSIDERS APPROVING**  
**BISMUTH-TIN SHOT FOR WATERFOWL HUNTING**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is requesting public comments on a proposal to allow the use of bismuth-tin shot for waterfowl hunting during the 1994-95 season. The Service's proposal is in response to a petition for rulemaking filed with the Service by the principal manufacturer of the shot, the Bismuth Cartridge Company.

The Fish and Wildlife Service proposal would allow interim use of bismuth shot this hunting season provided the company completes toxicity studies before the hunting season begins. Additional studies would have to be completed before use of bismuth-tin would be permitted next year. Research and studies conducted to date using the new type of shot indicate it is nontoxic to migratory waterfowl when ingested. If approved, bismuth-tin shot could only be used during late waterfowl hunting seasons (beginning October 1 or after) because the rulemaking process cannot be completed in time for early hunting seasons.

Waterfowl are known to die from lead poisoning caused when the birds accidentally swallow spent lead shot while feeding. The Fish and Wildlife Service began seeking nontoxic substitutes

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for lead shot in waterfowl hunting during the 1970's. To date, only steel shot has been approved by the Service as nontoxic, and its use was phased in for waterfowl hunting nationwide from 1986 through 1992.

In the proposal, the Service maintains that giving the waterfowl hunter a choice of alternative types of shot may enhance compliance with nontoxic shot regulations in the field.

Bismuth-tin shot is currently under a similar conditional approval issued by the Canadian Wildlife Service for use in that country's nontoxic shot zones.

The Fish and Wildlife Service cautions waterfowl hunters that bismuth shot is currently illegal to use or possess while hunting waterfowl. This prohibition will remain in effect until the Service grants conditional or full approval for the use of bismuth shot to hunt waterfowl.

Comments concerning the proposal, published in the August 22, 1994, Federal Register, should be submitted by September 21 and addressed to: Director (FWS/MBMO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 634 ARLSQ, 1849 C St. NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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